

The Botany of Niihau Island, Hawaii, as Seen on Captain Cook's Voyage, 1778–1779¹

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CAPTAIN JAMES COOK'S VESSELS made very brief visits to Niihau, or, as he called it, *Oneehouuw*. They were in search of fresh water, but found no supply of it, and of food supplies, and of these they obtained a few yams.

David Samwell, of Cook's crew, reported (Beaglehole 1967:3:1231) that "Neehaw for the most part consists of low land bare of Trees, the soil is rich & capable of producing all kinds of fruit was it properly cultivated, but as the Island is thin of Inhabitants, the small Patches which are here & there planted with yams, Taroo and sweet potatoes afford a sufficient supply for them while large plains of fine Land is suffered to lie waste. . . . Saw a few Plantations of Sugar Cane & Plantains and two or three Palm Trees, . . . There is not much water, it being to be found but in few places in small wells."

No plant collections were made on Niihau, but the following plants were reported:

CULTIVATED PLANTS

Saccharum officinarum L., sugar cane
Cocos nucifera L., palm trees (= coconut)
Colocasia esculenta (L.) Schott, var. *anti-*

quorum (Schott) Hubb. & Rehd., "taroo"
(= taro)

Dioscorea alata L., "oohe" (= uhi), yams
Musa X paradisiaca L., var. *normalis* Ktze.,
plantain

Piper methysticum Forst. f., "ova" (= 'awa)
Broussonetia papyrifera (L.) Vent., "touta"
or cloth tree (= wauke)

Ipomoea Batatas (L.) Poir., sweet potato
Lagenaria siceraria (Molina) Standl.

PLANT MATERIALS FROM ANOTHER ISLAND

Pandanus sp. (as leaf mats)
Aleurites moluccana (L.) Willd., "dooe"
dooe" (= kukui)

NATIVE PLANTS

Sida sp., "areemah" (= 'ilima)

LITERATURE CITED

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